

WHERE DO THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

**STAND ON THE
ISSUES?**



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The National Education Association (NEA) has heard from education voters and our members across the country who are looking for information on where the Presidential candidates stand on important issues regarding education.

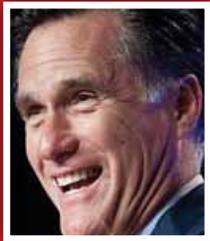
To help inform your decision about who to support in the 2012 elections, NEA has provided this comparison brochure based on our research of the public statements and websites of all of the candidates.

To learn more, please visit www.EdVotes.org/Election2012



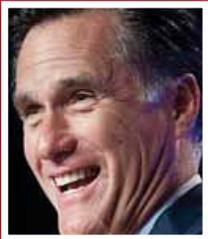
2012 ISSUE GUIDE: WHERE THE CANDIDATES STAND



	Education Funding	Vouchers
	<p>NEA believes public schools need consistent and substantial funding from federal, state, and local programs to help students learn and thrive.</p> <p>Students nationwide cannot afford the consequences of slashing educators' jobs—larger class sizes, less personalization, and less support for behavioral, emotional, or social challenges.</p>	<p>NEA opposes voucher programs that create taxpayer-funded subsidies for private schools. Instead of taking money from public schools—which 90% of our children attend—we should invest in reducing class sizes, increasing parental involvement, and expanding students' access to high-level math and science courses.</p>
 <p>President Barack Obama</p>	<p>The Obama Administration has made education funding its highest domestic priority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The FY2013 budget provides the largest percentage increase to education. • The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act saved 400,000 educator jobs and the Education Jobs Fund saved an additional 150,000 jobs. • The Administration strongly supports the American Jobs Act, which contains \$30 billion in funding for states to hire and rehire educators. <p><small>(Source: WhiteHouse.gov)</small></p>	<p>President Obama opposes school vouchers. In 2011, when Congress was pushing to extend the controversial D.C. school voucher program, the President stated that <i>“private school vouchers are not an effective way to improve student achievement.”</i> President Obama also believes that vouchers are not a long-term answer to the educational challenges that face public schools.</p> <p><small>(Sources: Statement of Administration Policy, H.R. 471, OMB, 3/29/11; Politico, 1/26/11)</small></p>
 <p>Fmr. Gov. Mitt Romney (MA)</p>	<p>As Governor of Massachusetts, Romney slashed \$2.3 million from special education, and \$25 million from school readiness grants, early literacy programs and school meals for low-income students.</p> <p>As a candidate for President, Romney has pledged his support for Rep. Paul Ryan's budget, which would cut funding for education and other priorities, such as cutting Title I by \$2.7 billion and slashing Head Start access for 100,000 kids.</p> <p><small>(Sources: Gloucester Daily Times, 11/30/06; MA Budget and Policy Center, 3/5/03; The Note, ABC, 3/20/12; Education Week Blog, 3/22/12)</small></p>	<p>As a 1994 Senate candidate, Romney pledged to vote for a means-tested school voucher program.</p> <p>As a candidate for president, Romney said states should <i>“make sure [they] have school choice.”</i> He would take tax dollars from public schools to fund private for-profit schools at taxpayers' expense.</p> <p>Romney's education plan calls for turning Title I and IDEA funding into vouchers leaving low-income students and students with disabilities to beg for necessary services.</p> <p><small>(Sources: Boston Globe review of 1994 campaign issues, Glassbooth.org, 3/3/02; Florida Republican Debate, 9/22/11; Mitt Romney Education Plan, 5/23/12)</small></p>

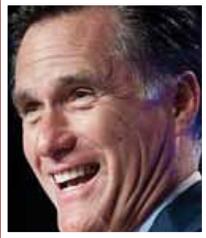
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	Early Childhood Education	Higher Education
	<p>NEA believes high-quality early childhood education programs should be a priority and should be considered an integral part of the education continuum, with fully-funded, high-quality programs through public schools.</p> <p>The federal government should provide support for early childhood education programs, including Head Start and full-day kindergarten.</p>	<p>We must ensure access to financial assistance and choice for all students who wish to pursue postsecondary education, regardless of personal financial means. This includes emphasizing needs-based financial aid through grants, rather than loans, and full federal funding of financial assistance programs like Pell Grants.</p> <p>Access to postsecondary programs should not be impeded by age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identification, disability, race, military registration status or ability to pay.</p>
 <p>President Barack Obama</p>	<p>President Obama <i>“supports a seamless and comprehensive set of services and support for children, from birth through age 5... he will urge states to impose high standards across all publicly funded early learning settings, develop new programs to improve opportunities and outcomes, engage parents in their child’s early learning and development, and improve the early education workforce.”</i></p> <p><small>(Source: WhiteHouse.gov)</small></p>	<p>President Obama has consistently promoted affordable access to higher education for all students. He has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signed into law \$36 billion over 10 years to increase the maximum Pell Grant award and \$2 billion for community colleges. • Led the charge to stop the student loan interest rate hike. • Signed an executive order protecting men and women who have served or are currently in the military from unscrupulous <i>“diploma mills.”</i> <p><small>(Source: WhiteHouse.gov)</small></p>
 <p>Fmr. Gov. Mitt Romney (MA)</p>	<p>As Governor of Massachusetts, Romney cut early education and pre-K funding, vetoed \$10 million for kindergarten expansion, questioned the benefits of early education, and suggested Head Start was a failure. Romney’s education plan ignores early education.</p> <p><small>(Source: MA Budget and Policy Center, 3/5/03; Mitt Romney Education Plan, 5/23/12)</small></p>	<p>Romney has continually supported policies to cut funding to higher education and would support increasing the number of for-profit higher education institutions.</p> <p>As Governor of Massachusetts, he proposed raising tuition by 15% and reduced higher education funding. As a result, student fees were increased by 63% to offset budget cuts.</p> <p>Romney’s higher education plan calls for cuts in federal funding because he says it ‘helped fuel the problem,’ and will roll back student-protection regulations in the for-profit and student loan industries that curb fraud and abuse.</p> <p><small>(Sources: Boston Globe, 3/3/03; Boston Globe, 6/29/07; Ames Tribune, 12/29/11; Mitt Romney Education Plan, 5/23/12)</small></p>

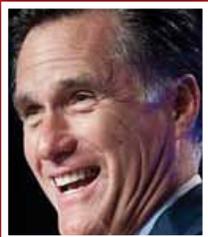
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	ESEA/NCLB	Workers' Rights
	<p>ESEA created a partnership among federal, state and local governments to confront poverty and its damaging effects by targeting federal aid to poor students and schools. The federal government must balance support of states and local school districts' efforts with its critical role in ensuring equitable access to a quality education.</p> <p>While NCLB's broad goals and commitment to closing achievement gaps should be applauded, the law disregards the realities of school, district and state capacity, and requires unrealistic outcomes without supplying the requisite support and resources.</p>	<p>NEA believes that attaining and exercising collective bargaining rights are essential to promoting the needs of both students and educational professionals.</p> <p>Restrictions on school employees' right to bargain collectively leaves teachers and education support professionals with little say in the quality of public education. All workers have a right to organize and join a union without harassment or retaliation from employers.</p>
 <p>President Barack Obama</p>	<p>President Obama believes providing a high-quality public education for all children is critical to our economic future. He emphasizes the <i>"path to the American Dream depend[s] on providing every child with an education that will enable them to succeed in a global economy."</i></p> <p><i>"I want to take us in a new and better direction... This agenda starts with education... We cannot be satisfied until every child in America—and I mean every child—has the same chances for a good education that we want for our own children."</i></p> <p><small>(Sources: WhiteHouse.gov; Weekly Radio Address, 5/21/11)</small></p>	<p>President Obama fully supports workers' rights to form unions and opposes so-called "right-to-work" legislation.</p> <p>President Obama believes <i>"collective bargaining is a fundamental American value."</i> The President cited labor as <i>"the reason we have a minimum wage, weekends away from work to rest and spend time with family, and basic protections in our workplaces."</i> He said <i>"making it harder for public employees to collectively bargain is an assault on unions."</i></p> <p><small>(Sources: Presidential Proclamation, Office of the Secretary, The White House, 9/2/11; WTMJ-TV, 2/17/11; Political Punch, ABC, 2/17/11; The Washington Independent, 9/6/11; WSAZ.com, 4/26/11)</small></p>
 <p>Fmr. Gov. Mitt Romney (MA)</p>	<p>Romney <i>"likes"</i> NCLB because it <i>"reins in national teachers unions"</i> and calls for testing kids.</p> <p>In his book <i>No Apology</i>, Romney wrote: <i>"Former president George W. Bush was right to champion [NCLB] which requires states to test student progress and to evaluate school performance... Only the federal government had the clout, to force testing through the barricade mounted by the national teachers' unions."</i></p> <p>Romney's plan for school improvement is to bolster school report cards, and transform federal funding into vouchers that support private schools and tutoring providers.</p> <p><small>(Sources: Fox News, 1/24/08; Union Leader, 10/30/07; Detroit Free Press, 2/16/12; Romney, Mitt. <i>No Apology</i>, 2011, pp 234-235; Mitt Romney Education Plan, 5/23/12)</small></p>	<p>Romney has stated he would sign a national "right-to-work" law if president.</p> <p>Romney supported the failed New Hampshire "right-to-work" law and waffled on restricting teachers' collective bargaining rights in Ohio, ultimately supporting restrictions.</p> <p>Romney also supported the attack on teachers' rights in Wisconsin.</p> <p><small>(Sources: The Street, 9/28/11; Bloomberg, 11/23/11; Los Angeles Times, 11/30/11; Politico, 10/25/11; Boston Globe, 2/24/11)</small></p>

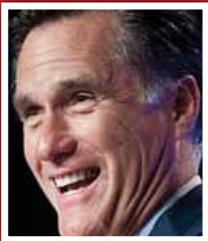
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	Fair Pay for Women	Health Care Reform
	<p>NEA believes women should have equal access to employment, promotion, compensation and leadership. In the workplace, policies for family leave, maternity leave, paternity leave, childcare leave and professional leave are critical to the participation and growth of women at all levels.</p> <p>All workers should be paid on the basis of requirements, skills and worth of their jobs, and factors such as gender or race should never play a role in determining salary.</p>	<p>Ensuring quality, affordable health care is vital to maintaining great public schools.</p> <p>The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act opened the door to health care possibilities for millions of children and their families who never before had access. When children and students of all ages lack necessary medical and dental services, serious impediments to the learning process occur.</p>
 <p>President Barack Obama</p>	<p>The President strongly supported and signed the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act into law. He also supports Paycheck Fairness Act and acknowledges that <i>“gains in education and labor force involvement have not yet translated into wage and income equity.”</i></p> <p><small>(Sources: WhiteHouse.gov; The Washington Post, 1/29/09)</small></p>	<p>With passage of the Affordable Care Act, President Obama has ensured that Medicare is stronger for seniors, women have access to life-saving mammograms and children won't lose coverage for pre-existing conditions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 180 million Americans have protection against gender discrimination, denial of care, excessive premium increases and lifetime caps on care. • 86 million Americans have access to free preventive care, including cancer screenings. • 2.5 million young adults have insurance under their parents' plans. <p><small>(Sources: HRSA.gov; WhiteHouse.gov/HealthReform)</small></p>
 <p>Fmr. Gov. Mitt Romney (MA)</p>	<p>As Governor of Massachusetts, Romney implemented policies that hurt women. He thinks low-income mothers should be required to work outside the home or lose their benefits, <i>“even if you have a child 2 years of age.”</i></p> <p><small>(Sources: MSNBC, 4/12/12; Boston Globe, 12/8/04; The Huffington Post, 4/15/12)</small></p>	<p>Romney would issue <i>“ObamaCare waivers”</i> for states and work with Congress to repeal the legislation.</p> <p>Romney has pledged to <i>“eliminate Title X family planning programs,”</i> which cover preventative screenings, reproductive health services, and cervical-cancer exams for low-income women.</p> <p><small>(Source: MittRomney.com)</small></p>

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	Social Security & Retirement Benefits	Tax Fairness
	<p>NEA strongly opposes any privatization of Social Security. Social Security did not contribute to the nation's deficit and should not be cut to address it. Educators are particularly vulnerable in their retirement security, both because of their comparatively low salaries and the increasing attacks on their pension plans. Educators, like the majority of middle-class Americans, rely on Social Security for their future.</p> <p>Cuts to Social Security would fall disproportionately on low-income individuals, particularly minorities, who depend on Social Security and Medicare.</p>	<p>A fair and progressive tax system should generate the necessary revenue to support investments in priority areas such as education, infrastructure, and high-value research and development. The increasing erosion of the corporate tax base has contributed to the country's economic position.</p> <p>It is unconscionable to expect children, the elderly, the poor and the disabled to suffer while wealthy corporations and greedy CEOs continue to prosper without paying their fair share.</p>
 <p>President Barack Obama</p>	<p>President Obama is committed to protecting and strengthening Social Security. He will work to find a bipartisan solution that strengthens Social Security for future generations, without putting current retirees or people with disabilities at risk. The President opposes slashing benefits for future generations or subjecting Americans' retirement income to the whims of the stock market.</p> <p><small>(Sources: WhiteHouse.gov; Weekly Radio Address, 8/14/10)</small></p>	<p>President Obama successfully urged Congress to pass an extension of the Payroll Tax Cut. He challenged Republicans to not <i>"raise taxes on nearly 160 million hardworking Americans because they refused to ask a few hundred thousand millionaires and billionaires to pay their fair share."</i></p> <p><small>(Sources: WhiteHouse.gov; CNN, 11/30/11)</small></p>
 <p>Fmr. Gov. Mitt Romney (MA)</p>	<p>Romney would change Social Security as we know it by privatizing it, raising the retirement age, and reducing payments.</p> <p><small>(Sources: Florida Republican Debate, 10/27/07; Romney, Mitt. <i>No Apology</i>, 2011, Pg 173)</small></p>	<p>Romney wants to make sure corporations and the richest Americans continue to benefit from the Bush tax cuts. In fact, the only tax cuts that Romney opposes are the ones that benefit the middle class.</p> <p><small>(Sources: Fox News, 2/9/09; The Huffington Post, 11/23/11; Time, 11/7/11)</small></p>

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